

➤ **Introductions**

➤ **Announcements**

- Hasson Rashid of the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT) and Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) asked agencies to contact him if they would like him to publicize their programs and/or appear on the CCTV program he hosts “Human Services News and Information” on CCTV’s BeLive. For more information, contact Hasson at hasson.rashid@gmail.com
- Marianne Colangelo of the City of Cambridge’s Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) announced the date of the next HMIS training for new users: January 21st, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Registration is required. Contact Marianne at mcolangelo@cambridgema.gov for more information.
- Marianne also introduced Helen Corless who has joined DHSP as the new Web Resource Guide Coordinator. Helen now oversees [Cambridge Somerville Resource Guide](#), and will become familiar to many CoC members in the coming months. You can reach her at hcorless@cambridgema.gov or crsginfo@cambridgema.gov.
- Liz Mengers of DHSP said that she was in the process of submitting Cambridge’s 2012 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to HUD. She will conduct a preliminary review of the data from the 2012 AHAR at our January HSPC meeting.

- **Vacancies** – Gina White of AIDS Action Committee (AAC) said that [Ruah House](#) had two SRO units available to HIV + women who needed extra case management. Ruah House provides permanent supportive housing. While this program is now operated by Victory Programs, AAC maintains the wait list. For more information, contact AAC’s Sarah Quinn at squinn@aac.org

➤ **MA State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) ESG Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Program**

Elisa Bresnahan and Elaine Frawley of DHCD came to talk about Cambridge’s new state funded Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. The state ESG Rapid Re-Housing Program is targeted to individuals coming from shelters or places unfit for human habitat. The program can provide up to \$4,000 in rental assistance for each eligible participant moving into market rate housing, and \$2,000 for those moving onto subsidized housing. Other eligible costs include: payment of security deposits; utility deposits/ arrearage payments; moving costs but not furniture; first month’s rent (market rate housing only); last month’s rent (market rate housing only); and monthly assistance (market rate housing only).

There is no income restriction for those entering the RRH program and the program can assist roommates and couples without children. Participants do not need to move within Cambridge, and the program can serve individuals from outside Cambridge as long as they come from a CoC that does not have a RRH program. Participants from St Patrick’s Shelter are also eligible. This program is administered by the Multi-Service Center (MSC). Clients must be referred to Beth Anderson, the ESG Case Manager. For more information and/or to receive a referral form, contact Beth at benos@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-6332.

Jolyon Cowan of DHSP mentioned that the City has its own ESG RRH program that can serve HUD-defined homeless clients also coming from transitional housing programs, and additionally homeless families.

➤ **Cambridge's Application for the 2012 HUD CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)**

Liz Mengers introduced the 2012 Continuum of Care (CoC) Competition NOFA, which is the first of its kind under the new HEARTH regulations where all Supportive Housing Programs (SHP) and Shelter Plus Care (S+C) programs are to be renewed under the [CoC Interim Program Rule](#).

Liz went on to say that because of HUD's budgetary constraints, there is not enough funding to renew all existing SHP and S+C programs at current proposed levels. The [NOFA](#) spells out that CoCs must rank and prioritize programs into two tiers. The first tier being the CoC's Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) as approved in the Grant Inventory Worksheet (GIW) submitted to HUD minus 3.5%. For Cambridge that amount is \$3,592,430. This leaves a funding shortfall of over \$130,000 to renew existing programs and excludes proposed bonus and planning grant applications. Permanent Housing Bonus projects can be ranked in Tier 1, but would then displace renewal projects into Tier 2. Programs renewing in Tier 2 would have a much higher uncertainty of receiving funding. The shortfall of \$130,000 Liz noted includes an admin line item increase from the approximately 5% most projects currently receive to a proposed 7% admin amount. Therefore, some of the 3.5% cut is from proposed future funding and not current funding levels.

The deadline to submit the NOFA is January 18th, 2013, and the best case scenario for receiving notification from HUD of funding would be in March, 2013 for Tier 1 projects, and potentially as late as May or June for Tier 2 projects. One problem we face as a CoC is that a number of our programs renew sooner, and therefore would have to choose whether to continue to operate without the promise of reimbursement from HUD.

Liz then went on to discuss the proposed scoring criteria for ranking Cambridge's renewal projects saying that the scoring tool, which she distributed to the group, is based on HUD's national objectives. She asked for feedback and suggestions on the scoring methodology. After much discussion, the group agreed that an indicator should be added to the scoring criteria that awards additional points to projects with beds designated for the chronically homeless. The group also agreed to give less weight to the indicator scoring employment at program exit due to the high number of disabled homeless clients served by the CoC who are essentially not able to work. There was also a discussion about whether projects should be ranked according to their component type or across the entire CoC. For instance, would a Supportive Services Only project have to compete with a Permanent Housing project? No consensus was reached on this issue.

Liz said that the next step was to take the decision of how to rank programs and strategize our NOFA application to the 2012 SuperNOFA Steering Committee. This Committee -- comprised of four key stakeholders from the Cambridge CoC with no direct financial interest in the annual NOFA -- is scheduled to meet on December 14th. Liz outlined the three potential strategies she will bring to the SuperNOFA Steering Committee to apply for this year's NOFA:

1. Cut every renewal project 3.5% to make sure all renewals are in Tier 1;
2. After scoring all renewal projects, rank them accordingly and at least \$130,000 of renewal funding would fall into Tier 2 and would risk not being funded; or
3. Using a hybrid of the two approaches leaving admin at 2011 levels therefore reducing the amount of renewal funding that would need to fall into Tier 2.

With no clearly underperforming projects to put into Tier 2, participants agreed that the CoC was faced with a very tough decision on how to proceed, and no consensus was reached. Sue White of Vinfen, the sub recipient of the 2012 Bonus Application, supported placing their Permanent Housing Bonus application into Tier 2 so as not to potentially draw funding away from an existing program. Liz suggested that if Vinfen's project is not selected for funding in this year's competition because it falls into Tier 2, the CoC recommend the proposal for funding again in the 2013 competition as long as the proposal aligns with HUD's 2013 funding priorities.

Kelly Mulligan of HomeStart asked if agencies with multiple CoC projects could spread the cuts agency-wide between a number of programs. There was an agreement that we should be able to do this as long as individual project line-items were at or below those specified in the 2012 GIW, and this was done in compliance with all HUD regulations.

Ronit Barkai of Transition House added that our application strategy should factor in the intention to prevent any further homelessness in our community.

➤ **Next meeting:** January 10, 2012